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**Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly**

# Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

## Report of the Secretary-General

## I. Introduction

1. On the recommendation of the World Summit for Social Development, the General Assembly decided in 1995 to hold a special session in the year 2000 to review and appraise the outcome of the Summit and to decide on further initiatives for social development.

2. The twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world", was convened at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000 and resulted in the adoption of an outcome document entitled "Further initiatives for social development" (resolution S-24/2).

3. The present report has been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 55/46 of 29 November 2000, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-sixth session a report on "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly". It will be recalled that a report of the Secretary-General on the subject was submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session (A/55/344). The present report provides selected information on follow-up activities undertaken since the issuance of that report to implement the outcome of the Summit and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly. The report should be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General on the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, which is also before the Assembly at the current session.

4. As part of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, Member States submitted national reports containing information on progress achieved and obstacles encountered in carrying out the commitments agreed in Copenhagen in 1995. Information on follow-up at the national level was reflected in the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (A/AC.253/13-E/CN.5/2000/2). Similar information on follow-up by Governments to the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly is not yet available. Against this background, the present report mainly focuses on follow-up activities undertaken by

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the relevant intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations and within the United Nations system to implement the further initiatives for social development adopted at the special session.

## II. Overview of follow-up undertaken in intergovernmental bodies

### General Assembly

5. The debate at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the agenda item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the special session of the General Assembly in this regard", took place at two meetings on 31 October 2000. A total of 39 speakers took the floor to review the outcome of the special session and to report on progress made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Summit and the special session. Speakers welcomed the further initiatives for social development adopted at the special session as an important contribution to maintaining the momentum established at the Summit in 1995, where social development had been firmly placed at the centre of the international policy debate. The outcome of the special session had put the core issues of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action — poverty eradication, employment generation and social integration — in a more contemporary context of globalization and other challenges.

6. Several statements emphasized the complementarity between the outcomes of the Millennium Summit and the twenty-fourth special session. The Millennium Declaration had a strong focus on social development issues and had reaffirmed the international target adopted at the special session to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty. The invitation to the Economic and Social Council to launch a global campaign to eradicate poverty was highlighted in this connection. Speakers also noted that the outcome of the special session had broken new ground in some areas, for example by focusing on reducing international financial volatility and by calling for a rigorous analysis of new and innovative sources of funding for social development, both of which would be important themes of the International Conference on Financing for Development. Other important outcomes of the special session included the reaffirmation of the primary role of the State in promoting social development; the call for the elaboration of an international employment strategy; as well as references to corporate social responsibility, HIV/AIDS, the provision of essential drugs at affordable prices and ILO conventions on basic workers' rights.

7. The General Assembly adopted a mainly procedural resolution (resolution 55/46) on follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the special session, which inter alia invited all actors of the United Nations system and other relevant intergovernmental forums to take all necessary steps, on a priority basis, to ensure the effective implementation of the outcome of the Summit and the special session.

### Economic and Social Council

8. At its twenty-fourth special session, the General Assembly requested the Economic and Social Council, through the Commission for Social Development, to assess regularly the further implementation of the outcome of the Summit and of the special session. While the substantive follow-up to the Summit and the special session is primarily undertaken through the Commission for Social Development (see below), the Council has regularly been considering the question of how to promote an integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. In its agreed conclusions 2000/2,[1] the Council noted inter alia that future conference reviews should be prepared in a well-coordinated manner and that there was a need to ensure that not too many processes are held over the same period of time. Against this background, the Council will at its substantive session of 2001 consider different options for improving conference follow-up at the intergovernmental level (see E/2001/73).

9. At the twenty-fourth special session, the General Assembly specifically invited the Economic and Social Council to consolidate the ongoing actions, initiatives and recommendations established in the outcome of the Summit and the special session and in the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), with a view to launching a global campaign for the eradication of poverty. At its substantive session in 2001, the Council will have before it a note by the Secretariat (E/2001/84) in which it is proposed that the initiation of a global campaign consist of two broad

components: a consolidation and coordination of existing relevant initiatives within the international community, as well as the launching of a major advocacy campaign. The proposal of a global campaign for the eradication of poverty has been under consideration by the Administrative Committee for Coordination, which inter alia recommended that the data available within the United Nations system on poverty be improved and refined and that each organization within the system undertake an analysis of the contribution of its programmes to the poverty eradication targets.

**Commission for Social Development**

10. The thirty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development was held in New York from 13 to 23 February 2001. The Commission considered two topics under its agenda and multi-year programme of work, namely, the priority theme "Enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability in a globalizing world" and the sub-theme "The role of volunteerism in the promotion of social development". In addition, the Commission adopted a multi-year programme of work for the period 2002-2006.

11. The Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General on enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability in a globalizing world (E/CN.5/2001/2), which had been prepared on the basis of two expert group meetings. The first meeting, held in Berlin (10-12 October 2000), was entitled "Beyond safety nets: the challenge of social protection in a globalizing world", and the second, held in Cape Town, South Africa (30 October-1 November 2000), discussed the theme "Coping in dire circumstances: traditional and modern schemes of social protection in the context of development". The report provides an overview of different approaches and definitions of social protection, reviews contemporary challenges to social protection systems in different parts of the world in the face of globalization and other global trends and presents a number of recommendations at the national and international levels to strengthen social protection.

12. At the twenty-fourth special session, the General Assembly called for the sharing of experiences and best practices on how to establish or improve social protection systems. The debate on social protection, as well as the expert panel discussion, of the thirty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development provided a fruitful environment in which government representatives and experts exchanged national experiences and discussed obstacles to enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerabilities in different contexts. The Commission adopted a decision in which it recognized the need for further analyses, research and sharing of views, and decided to consider possible ways of further examining the issue at a future session.

13. Concerning the sub-theme, the Commission recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of a resolution on volunteering and social development in which, inter alia, it welcomed the work of the United Nations Volunteers as the focal point for the International Year of Volunteers; encouraged Governments to support voluntary action by creating a favourable enabling environment, to take into consideration volunteerism in national development planning and to consider all means available for more people to become involved in voluntary action; and encouraged organizations of the United Nations system to further support voluntary action for social development.

14. The Commission adopted the multi-year programme of work of the Commission for the period 2002-2006 (see below), which is built around a number of core themes of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:

2002: Integration of social and economic policy (including social aspects of macroeconomic policies; social assessment as a policy tool; and expenditures in the social sector as a productive factor)

2003: National and international cooperation for social development (including sharing of experiences and practices in social development; forging partnerships for social development; social responsibility of the private sector; impact of employment strategies on social development; and policies and role of international financial institutions and their effect on national social development strategies)

2004: Improving public sector effectiveness

2005: Review of further implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (subject to

decision of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 2001)

2006: Review of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006).

15. The exact modalities for the Commission's 10-year review in 2005 of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly have yet to be determined. As mentioned in the preceding section, the Economic and Social Council is to undertake at its substantive session in 2001 a review of the coordinated implementation and follow-up of all major United Nations conferences and summits, which could impact on the Commission's scheduled 10-year review.

## III. Follow-up activities undertaken within the United Nations system

16. The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action as well as the further initiatives for social development adopted at the special session clearly identify Governments as bearing the prime responsibility for ensuring social development and human well-being. At the same time, however, it is recognized that a broad range of commitments and initiatives require concerted action at the international level, including in particular follow-up action by the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system. In the following paragraphs, information on follow-up actions undertaken both within the United Nations Secretariat and within the United Nations system as a whole is provided.

### United Nations Secretariat

17. Within the United Nations Secretariat, the responsibility of assisting in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and the special session and the servicing of the intergovernmental bodies involved rests with the Division for Social Policy and Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Department is responsible for supporting and encouraging Governments, civil society, and the private sector, as well as United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in their follow-up activities. Apart from acting as focal point and coordinator within the United Nations system, the Secretariat itself has undertaken a number of actions to implement the commitments and initiatives adopted at the Summit and the special session.

18. In relation to the call by the General Assembly at the special session for systems to monitor the social impact of macroeconomic policies, the Department has co-funded a study on the impact of external liberalization of economic performance and social policy, which includes case studies made in nine countries: Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, India, Mexico, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Zimbabwe. The Secretariat jointly hosted a meeting with the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom in March 2001 on the integration of social and economic policies. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange experiences on best practices in integrating the social and economic, particularly in the context of globalization and of discussions on international financial architecture. These activities will also contribute to the preparations for the fortieth session of the Commission for Social Development, which will have as its priority theme the integration of economic and social policy.

19. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs will be launching a project financed from voluntary contributions entitled "International Forum for Social Development". The Forum, which will serve as a continuation of the Copenhagen Seminars for Social Progress, convened by the Government of Denmark between 1996 and 1999 as follow-up to the Summit, will bring together main actors of the development process from the public and private spheres to debate the policies and modes of cooperation that could contribute to the implementation of the objectives of the Summit and the special session.

20. As part of the Department's technical cooperation activity, a series of subregional meetings are being held on capacity-building and networking to enhance awareness and promote implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly. The first subregional training workshop was held in Guatemala, with the participation of representatives of Governments and civil society from Spanish-speaking Central American and Caribbean countries. A second workshop was convened in Moscow to support capacity-building and human development in CIS-countries. Additional technical meetings related to the follow-up of the Summit and the special session have

been held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, entitled "Interregional Workshop on Resource Mobilization for Social Development"; in Nairobi, on "Inter- and Intra-Regional Cooperation to promote effective social development policy and practice: A forum for the exchange of Asia-Africa experiences"; in Harbin, China, on "Networking and capacity-building for social development in North East Asia"; and in Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, China, entitled "Interregional Workshop on Poverty Eradication and Environmental Protection". The subregional technical meetings respond to a substantial need — at local, national and regional levels — for detailed information on the outcomes and priorities of the Summit and the special session and provide an opportunity for countries to share best practices and experiences, as well as discuss major obstacles, in the promotion of social development.

21. One of the central themes of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly was the importance of mobilizing additional resources for social development. In the context of resource mobilization at the international level, the special session inter alia called for the conduct of a rigorous analysis of new and innovative sources of funding, both public and private, for dedication to social development and poverty eradication programmes. As part of the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration and of the preparations for the International Conference on Financing for Development, a High-level Panel on Financing for Development, chaired by the former President of Mexico, Dr. Ernesto Zedillo, and composed of several former Ministers of Finance and other eminent persons, was established. The report of the High-level Panel on Financing for Development was released on 28 June 2001 (see A/55/1000). It focuses on five key areas — domestic resource mobilization, trade, private capital flows, international development cooperation and systemic issues — and provides a range of recommendations of relevance to the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.

22. The Department has recently finalized the *Report on the World Social Situation 2001*, which addresses many of the key social development issues of the Summit and the special session. The Report provides a comprehensive analysis — from a social perspective — of major global developments over the past years. Equity is the cross-cutting theme of the Report which is discussed in the context of changing socio-economic trends; institutional frameworks; living conditions; patterns of vulnerability and social protection; and social disruptions. *The Report on the World Social Situation 2001* will be before the Council at its substantive session in 2001 and the Third Committee at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

23. In the context of the Department's work on poverty, including as focal point for the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, consultations have been carried out on the proposal of the special session to establish a world solidarity fund. In response to General Assembly resolution 55/210, a note verbale was sent to all Member States requesting their views on the proposal. Organizations of the United Nations system were also asked to provide their inputs. The outcome of the consultations on the proposal for a world solidarity fund is contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

**United Nations system**

24. After the conclusion of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, the Secretariat initiated a focused effort to improve coordination of the activities of the United Nations system for the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and the further initiatives for social development.

25. An inter-agency consultation was convened in New York on 1 November 2000 with the participation of representatives of more than 20 agencies, funds and programmes. The meeting provided an opportunity for entities of the United Nations system to report, on an informal basis, on programmes and plans for follow-up to specific mandates and recommendations and to discuss further action on cross-cutting themes.

26. In a letter dated 3 August 2000, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs had requested the heads of all relevant agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to submit reports on progress achieved and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and the further initiatives for social development adopted at the special session. In response to that request, the Department received a total of 18 reports from different bodies in the United

Nations system[2] on measures taken to implement the outcome of the Summit and the special session. On this basis, the Department prepared an information note containing summaries of the reports received. The note, entitled "Compilation of summaries of reports on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session provided by the United Nations system",[3] was made available to Member States at the thirty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development.

27. The compilation shows that nearly all the bodies in the United Nations system have given careful consideration to the outcome of the special session. It contains a range of concrete examples of how the agencies, funds and programmes are implementing specific recommendations and initiatives. The sheer number of initiatives and follow-up actions reflected in the compilation is a testament to the commitment by the United Nations system to the objectives of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.

28. The direct involvement of the agencies, funds and programmes in the implementation of the outcome of the special session can in part be attributed to the valuable contribution made by those organizations in the preparatory process for the special session, in particular through the submission of reports containing recommendations which were subsequently incorporated into the draft outcome document for consideration by the Member States. It should also be noted, however, that many of the activities reported were in existence prior to the adoption of the further initiatives for social development. From this perspective, the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly provided an important political endorsement of the ongoing efforts of the United Nations system to promote social development for all.

29. Set out below is a selection of principal themes and main areas of follow-up action identified in the reports of the organizations of the United Nations system:

- Achieving the goal of reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by one half by the year 2015 by: launching a global campaign for the eradication of poverty, placing poverty eradication at the centre of economic and social development, developing and implementing pro-poor growth strategies, incorporating goals and targets for combating poverty into national strategies for socio-economic development, and giving priority to investments in education and health, social protection and basic social services;
- Monitoring the social impact of macroeconomic policies, including in the elaboration of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs);
- Strengthening the international financial architecture and reducing the negative social and economic impacts of international financial turbulence through: promoting sound domestic policies to create and maintain stable macroeconomic and financial conditions, introducing international crisis prevention and crisis management measures, enhancing transparency and accountability of the international financial institutions and improving the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in international economic decision-making processes;
- Supporting the integration of developing countries into the multilateral trading system;
- Promoting efforts to mobilize additional resources for social development at the national and international levels, including implementation of the Cologne debt-relief initiative and the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative;
- Sharing of best practices in the field of social protection;
- Minimizing undesirable humanitarian consequences of sanctions;
- Strengthening mechanisms for conflict prevention and peace-building, including the provision of humanitarian assistance in post-conflict situations that contributes to social integration;
- Elaborating a coordinated international strategy on employment;
- Implementing the Dakar Framework for Action for Education for All, adopted at the World Education Forum in April 2000, promoting human rights education and preparing a draft action plan for a United Nations Literacy Decade;

- Employing health policy as a proactive instrument for poverty reduction and economic and social development, integrating health dimensions into the policies and programmes of the organizations of the United Nations system, promoting public/private partnerships such as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) with the objective of providing affordable remedies for diseases that particularly afflict people in developing countries, and addressing the linkages between international trade and health;
- Strengthening the ability of countries and organizations to fight money laundering, preventing and controlling corruption, and combating transnational organized crime, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons;
- Promoting efforts to stop the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, including achieving the target of a 25 per cent reduction of HIV-infection levels among young people in 25 highly HIV-affected countries, implementing the International Partnership Against AIDS in Africa; and supporting national measures to prevent and protect against HIV/AIDS infection and to address the consequences of HIV/AIDS transmission;
- Finding durable solutions to the problems of refugees and returnees, including ensuring the voluntary repatriation of refugees and that sufficient resources are available to host countries to fulfil their responsibilities in the protection and security of refugees.

## IV. Conclusion

30. Achieving the goals and commitments adopted at the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly is an ongoing, long-term effort which involves determined action by Governments and the international community as well as actors of civil society and the private sector.

31. The present report has put emphasis on follow-up activities undertaken within the United Nations, in particular the agencies, funds and programmes. The process of inter-agency coordination initiated by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, including the preparation of the compilation of agency reports, clearly illustrates that the relevant entities within the United Nations system have given careful consideration to the outcome of the special session and are actively contributing to its implementation.

32. At the intergovernmental level, the principal body within the United Nations responsible for follow-up to the Summit and the special session is the Commission for Social Development. At its fortieth session, to be held in February 2002, the Commission will consider the issue of integration of economic and social policy, one of the overarching themes of the further initiatives for social development adopted at the special session. To provide substantive input to the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on this theme, a series of expert group meetings have been scheduled. The first meeting, on the theme "Expenditures in the social sector as a productive factor", was held in San José, Costa Rica (11-13 June 2001), generously hosted and funded by the Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social of the Government of Costa Rica. Two additional expert group meetings, on "Social impact assessment as a policy tool" and "Social aspects of macroeconomic policies"[*], are scheduled to be held later in the year.

33. There is complementarity between the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session and the follow-up to other major United Nations conferences and summits. The Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2), for example, reaffirmed the international poverty target adopted at the special session. Other issues in the Millennium Declaration, such as creating a national and international environment conducive to development and poverty eradication, halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, encouraging the pharmaceutical industry to make essential drugs more widely available and affordable, and addressing the special needs of Africa, are all dealt with in greater detail in the further initiatives for social development of the special session.

34. The International Conference on Financing for Development, to be convened in Mexico in March 2002, will continue the work initiated at the special session on elaborating recommendations for further action to mobilize resources for social development at the national and international levels. Likewise, the upcoming World Summit for Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg in September 2002, will

further deliberate on another central concept of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and the further initiatives for social development, namely, the importance of promoting the coordinated and simultaneous consideration of environmental, economic and social policies, which are mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development.

35. There is also a close link between the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly and the upcoming Second World Assembly on Ageing, to be held in Madrid in April 2002. One of the goals of the Second World Assembly is to mainstream ageing within the context of global agendas. The commitments adopted at the Summit and the special session link key issues to the well-being of older persons, and they will provide an important policy foundation for the revised International Plan of Action on Ageing, which is to be adopted at the World Assembly.

36. Given the broad and multidimensional nature of the social development issues addressed at the World Summit for Social Development and at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, the implementation process overlaps other processes within the United Nations. It is essential to ensure effective, integrated and coordinated follow-up at the national level, in the relevant intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations and by the organizations of the United Nations system.

*Notes*

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/55/3), chap. V.

[2] Department of Political Affairs, Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, secretariat of the Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, United Nations University, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, World Food Programme, United Nations Population Fund, International Labour Office, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Industrial Development Organization and World Trade Organization.

[3] The information note, as well as the full text of selected agency reports, can be downloaded at: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/geneva2000/follow-up.